



No zoo or hotel at Bodington Hill

Members will have seen recent media reports that a zoo and hotel development proposed at the old 'croc park' at Bodington Hill, Wentworth Falls has been granted State Significant Development (SSD) status on the basis of the capital investment value involved. At this point, no concrete plans are available but the Society understands, based on media reports, that the development could include a 56-room hotel, function centre, cafe, zoo, souvenir shop, walking trails and viewing platforms.

The significance of SSD status is that the development does not need to comply with the local planning framework, including the current zoning, and will bypass local approval. Instead, the proposal will be assessed and approved by the NSW Government-appointed Independent Planning Commission. As Mayor Mark Greenhill told the *Gazette* (January 27, p.4), "Council's role is essentially reduced to being able to make a submission".

The Society shares Council's concerns about the proposal bypassing local environmental protection standards, setting a precedent for development in the bushland buffer between towns and jeopardizing the World Heritage Area.

Given the environmental sensitivity of the site, the majority is zoned E2 Environmental Conservation under the Blue Mountains LEP, which prohibits intensive development. Development is highly constrained by the presence of steep slopes and hanging swamps on the site. It is very hard to imagine that a hotel, function centre and associated developments such as internal access roads and car and bus parking, as well as a zoo and associated tourist facilities, can be contained within the small portion of the site currently zoned for development.

For a full listing of the environmental and scenic issues that the Society believes will need to be addressed and thoroughly assessed, visit the [campaign page](#)

In addition to the environmental issues, bushfire risk and highway traffic and road safety need to be carefully evaluated. When the original, much less ambitious development was approved over thirty years ago, highway safety and traffic management including entry and exit to the Great Western Highway was the critical issue.

Members driving past the site will be aware that there is a concrete crash barrier separating oncoming traffic on Bodington Hill. How eastbound vehicles will enter and exit the site presents a significant problem. The original development contemplated an internal road joining Tableland Road, with eastbound vehicles exiting and re-entering the Highway at the top of Bodington Hill, at the 'Pot Shop'.

The Society also questions the appropriateness of a zoo within a World Heritage Area. Visitors come to the Blue Mountains to experience the natural environment and to enjoy Australian flora and fauna in a natural setting, not caged behind a fence.

The State Significant Development process and community consultation

The Society understands that the NSW Department of Planning, who will be managing the SSD process, has not yet received a Development Application for the proposal. This will be a long process and there will be opportunities for public input.

The Society will notify members when the plans are on public exhibition.

About us

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS) is an incorporated voluntary group of about 900 members helping to conserve the World Heritage Blue Mountains region. It was originally the Katoomba and District Wildlife Conservation Society, formed in 1961.

We are governed by a management committee and much of our conservation work is undertaken by sub-committees and campaigns. We also have a native plant nursery, several bushwalking groups and a Bushcare group.

Visit us

www.bluemountains.org.au.

Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Twitter: bmcsnsw

The Management Committee

There are 22 positions on the management committee and a full list of members occupying those positions can be found on page 10 and on our web page.

The following are some of the officers who you may want to contact.

- President: Tara Cameron,
taracameron4@gmail.com, 0418 824974
- Senior Vice President: Madi Maclean,
gos@bluemountains.org.au
- Second Vice President: Susan Crick,
susan@bluemountains.org.au
- Treasurer: Elizabeth Howard
eh.mistover@bigpond.com
- Land Use Officer: Angela Langdon
landuse@bluemountains.org.au
- Publicity Officer: Rebecca Knight
publicity@bluemountains.org.au

Contact us

- Call the Membership Secretary, Ross Coster on 02 4739 2987
- By mail at PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782
- By phone at 02 4757 1872 (leave a message)
- By bmcs1@bluemountains.org.au
- By Instagram https://www.instagram.com/blue_mts_conservation_society/

Management Committee Monthly meeting, 20 February, 2021

The following is a summary of key topics and particular issues discussed at the monthly meeting:

- Katoomba airfield and opposition to commercial helicopter charter proposal.
- Plans to improve communication with members and the public and inclusion of the topic in the next planning day.
- The upcoming Mick Dark talk organised jointly with Varuna.
- The Sunset Gathering catering and organisation and likely attendance of 50 people.
- 'The Weather Diaries' movie to go ahead due to large numbers booked.
- Submission and meetings with Council about Draft Lawson Crown Lands Plan of Management.
- Process to better coordinate requests for media interviews and media releases
- Plans for a history of conservation in the Greater Blue Mountains and request for support funding by the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area Advisory Committee.
- The AGM on 31 March, 2021 and talk by Dr. Kellie Leigh..
- Submission about Katoomba Masterplan preliminary consultation process.

Become a member

You can become a member by

- Contacting our Membership Secretary, Ross Coster on 02 4739 2987
- Emailing Ross at membership@bluemountains.org.au
- <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/joining.shtml> or scan this with your mobile:



Welcome to new members

A warm welcome to our new members who are as follows:

Catherine Peake
Nicky Dakin
Laetitia Smith
Kerry and Paul Rice
Jan Lambert
Lesley and John Tarlinton

Nathalie Verellen
Anthony Raper
Megan, Brad and James Murray
Judith Sampson
Zoe Wheat
Joel Robinson

There are 896 members.

Koalas on the AGM agenda

Our annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday 31 March at 7 pm. To book your attendance go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/annual-general-meeting-to-be-followed-by-guest-speaker-dr-kellie-leigh-tickets-143546949791>

Due to Covid restrictions, possible lighting issues at the Conservation Hut and an expected high attendance, we will be holding the meeting at Wentworth Falls School of Arts. All are welcome.

Our guest speaker will be Dr Kellie Leigh. Her talk will follow the annual general meeting.

Kellie is Executive Director/CEO of Science for Wildlife and has worked on koala conservation and research in NSW and Victoria for nine years.

During her previous ten years in Zambia she founded the non profit organisation, the Zambian Carnivore Programme using the African wild dog and other large carnivores as flagship species for landscape-scale conservation, and secured core funding from the World Wildlife Fund

Since returning to Australia she has developed conservation programs for a variety of organisations based on her successful model of combining research, on-ground conservation action and community education and engagement.

She completed her PhD through the University of Sydney where she maintains an Honorary Research Fellow position and has taught the wildlife population management components for a Masters degree. Her research expertise is focused on the application of science to conservation challenges and includes conservation biology, genetics, behavioural ecology, and recent innovative work in training and evaluating wildlife detection dogs.

For full details of the AGM, including Management Committee positions, please refer to our website - <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/index.shtml#agm>
For further information, please contact Alan Page - webmaster@bluemountains.org.au



When words aren't enough

Susan Crick

Every now and again nature beckons us to look more closely as Alan Page has shown with his camera and this photograph of an individual pink flannel flower. The detail in these small flowers is almost beyond the casual observer's focus and is so perfect, so fine, that words are not enough.

Right now, on the shallow soils across the wild exposed ridges there are thousands of these tiny jewels. When I recently first saw swathes of them at Mount Hay, it was as if a legend had come alive.

Photo> Alan Page

It seems that smoke from last summer's fires has brought them forth as if to emphasise that not everything is lost. They offer a silver and pink lining to the dark cloud of that season, perhaps a reward for bearing its tribulations.



Ramblings

Alan Page

A juvenile Copperhead snake near our back door sent our household into a spin recently. It had gone by the time a camera arrived, but we're pretty sure that is what it was.

The full name is Highlands Copperhead. They're viviparous – that is, they bear live young rather than laying eggs. The young are venomous from the get-go.

The Botanic Chasm.

I began my serious native plant journey nearly twenty years ago when I bought a digital camera that could take close ups from a few centimetres away. The first few photos captivated me (see image) and it remains so.



Photo: Broad leaf drumsticks, *Isopogon anemonifolius*. Alan Page

Taking photos and identifying native plants was very exciting and I was learning so much. But the more I learnt, the more I knew I didn't know.

To identify them I took photos of the leaves (both sides) as well as the flower (from various angles), and the stems, and I smelt the flowers. And I took some photos with a ruler – a plastic 15cm opaque dull one is best.

I adore the Mountain Devil (*Lambertia formosa*) as it's the only species in its genus and I struggle with sun orchids (*Thelymitra* sp.) - 13 species in the Blue Mountains and they only open on sunny days. I

found a Spotted Sun Orchid (*Thelymitra ixioides*) without spots - but was delighted with its honey snaps fragrance. The *Pomaderis* genus still does my head in.

I have over 250 Blue Mountains native plants on my website (waratahsoftware.com.au), and as I go back now and freshen up the photos (by adding a scale and watermark) and check their identity, I discover that there are sometimes changes to family, genus, species or subspecies. There are more species and subspecies - some with scant details and no images. A picture's worth a thousand words.

This has resulted in a loss of confidence on my part.

A dear friend told me to step back from the botanic chasm (my words), as there's a domain there where botanists don't agree and classifications are not stable. And then there's the language of botanists.

I guess in analysing the natural world we have always wanted to fit everything neatly into its own box, and it's our ignorance when we're bothered that it doesn't and our folly to try to make it so.

I'm now endeavouring to step back from the botanic chasm and will indicate on the website if I'm unsure of a plant's identity.

Pink Flannel Flowers (*Actinotus forsythii*).

I heard that there were Pink Flannel Flowers on the unburnt Ngula Bulgarabang (Radiata Plateau). This is about 2km from the fires on Narrow Neck where smoke would have triggered their growth.

This prompted me to look around Shipley Plateau as the masses of Pink Flannel Flowers there in 2004 were the best I've seen.

You can see Narrow Neck from Shipley. It's 5km as the raven flies. (We don't have crows around here.) And yes, there were dozens of Pink Flannel Flowers hidden around the regrowing banksias.

I've also now found a few in an unburnt part of Kings Tableland.

The Blue Mountains - home of environmental weeds

Susan Crick

Two environmental weeds, categorised as such by Blue Mountains City Council, are so prolific in the Blue Mountains that they are regarded as part of the scene and unfortunately are unlikely to be annihilated any time soon.

They are *Pinus radiata* and *Agapanthus*. While most regard *Pinus radiata* as a pest we just have to put up with because of the cost of removal, *Agapanthus* appears to be much loved and is repeatedly promoted and sold by nurseries. Wentworth Falls could be seen as the *Agapanthus* capital of the Mountains.

Agapanthus spreads vegetatively and by seed. It is very difficult to remove once it has taken hold with its strong roots and rhizomes. Ask any gardener who has tried. I recently watched as two exhausted men complained about the task after removing a small patch a couple of metres long near my house in Wentworth Falls.

So what's the problem? Simply, their domain is not limited to gardens. They invade native vegetation and can be seen everywhere on the edges and in the middle of the bush. Like many living things imported over the last 230 years, these South African origin plants run rampant in this fragile land.

But everyone can help prevent the spread of *Agapanthus*. As the Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland* said - **'Off with their heads' - NOW!**

One of our management committee members recently set about the task of removing 200 heads from a nearby patch. He calculated that if each head bore 30 to 50 seed pods and each pod has 20 to 50 seeds, he had removed up to 280,000

seeds. Perhaps Council could introduce a bounty. We'd all be rich.

So how about it? It takes very little time to prevent this weed from spreading by seed. Do your neighbours have them? Ask them to help prevent their spread or just offer to do it for them.

Once the seed heads are removed dispose of them properly in the bin (and hope that this will mean the end of them). If you choose to remove an entire plant, it is vital that only the leaves are used for composting. *Agapanthus* are a tough species and can grow a new plant from just a tiny section of the rootball or, in some cases, from an underground rhizome segment. So, if you want to be completely rid of the plant, it's important not to throw the whole lot into the compost.

Photo: Alan Page



A proposed history of the conservation of the Greater Blue Mountains Area

Susan Crick

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee proposes to publish a history of conservation in the Greater Blue Mountains area. It would record the efforts to understand, conserve and protect the area over the last 150 years. The Society has agreed to support the project as has the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The history will begin with the explorers, botanists, geologists and other scientists as they made their way through the Blue Mountains recording their observations. It will examine the first attempts in Australia to preserve natural heritage with the recording of the Jenolan Caves Reserve in 1866 and the listing of Govetts Leap for its aesthetic value in 1875. It also explores how Europeans interacted with this complex landscape during the 19th century.

It will record the beginnings of the bushwalking movement and the critical early work of Myles

Dunphy including the mapping of the Greater Blue Mountains Area and his campaign with many others to save the Blue Gum Forest. The modern conservation movement as it developed in the post war period and 60s and 70s, the listing of national parks and the creation of the National Parks and Wildlife Service will also be covered.

Of course it will also include the process involved in the development of the World Heritage nomination and will bring together the many efforts and challenges that have brought us to the 21st anniversary of the listing of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Ruth Longdin, a professional historian and heritage advisor on the GBMA Advisory Committee will compile the history. Doug Benson, editor of the Royal Botanic Gardens *Cunninghamia* will provide scientific and editorial advice and contribute to the scientific sections of the book.

Gardens of Stone Visitors Map

The Visitors Map is full of suggested walks and trips. It is in full colour, 60 by 85 cm in size, and covers the entire Gardens of Stone region at a 1:100,000 scale, making it ideal for planning your next trip to the area.

You can buy a map on the society's website at: www.bluemountains.org.au/GoS_VisitorsMap.htm

Are you concerned about environmental damage or a development related activity in your neighbourhood but don't know who to contact?

The Society's Planning & Development Resource Kit may help you.

<https://www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk-welcome.shtml>

Blue Trail Village Scenes No. 8

A Sustainable Town Embraces Its Heritage – Portland

Don Morison



Photo above: Contemplating the images of workers who made Portland a famous cement town. Christine Davies

The cement works in Portland closed in 1991 and the last lime quarry was decommissioned in 1998. The town now has about 2,000 residents. It is a potential destination for a trip across the mountains and is being promoted as a worthwhile stop on a tourist trail from Lithgow to Mudgee.

Numerous historic buildings, the presence of a town common on natural woodland, the hilliness of its site and the interspersing of native and exotic flora add to Portland's attractiveness. The most striking features are near the town centre. These include the tall cement silos now adorned with large murals of men and women who worked there.

Gradually, the dominant industrial sites are being cleaned up and recycled into modern uses and open space. These recall the old Portland and are compatible with the sustainability of the new. Not far from the tall silos, a nursery is taking shape.

The water-filled disused quarries are conspicuous and impressive visual features. There is discussion about how to create more public access.

The preserved buildings and murals of the business district evoke the mid 20th century. Everywhere, there is an unhurried atmosphere and the aura of industrial pioneering remains, even where tree changers have occupied the old cottages.

Photo below: Vegetation surrounds an inundated quarry. Christine Davies



Council lands to be managed as community land

Explore your local ex Crown Lands

Lyndal Sullivan

In May 2019 the NSW government handed over more than 150 Crown land reserves to Blue Mountains City Council. This included land for a range of public purposes such as sports grounds, cemeteries, community halls, parks and natural areas.

Council is currently preparing plans of management for these areas and the community will be invited to have a say about how they should be managed in future.

Much of this land is bushland, including some sites where local bushcare groups are already working. Other bushland areas could benefit from increased management. For example the Bluff Reserve at Glenbrook and Pulpit Rock Lookout at Blackheath. There are also some areas that have important remnant vegetation even though they are not identified as "bushland"; for example Mt Victoria cemetery.

You may find some hidden bushland treasures you may not have known about. Now is the time to look at the maps and put on your walking boots to go exploring. Don't wait for the community consultation to start.

As the state government has imposed a deadline for all the 150 odd plans to be finalised by the end of June, the period of community consultation may not be sufficient if you are interested in a number of your local areas.

This is an advanced alert so you can start thinking. You can get access to the maps of all these areas on the BMCC website (but don't try searching, use the links below). You might find some hidden bushland treasures you did not know about.

To look at the maps, go to the links below. Area 1 is the top of the mountains, going down the mountains to 5

For Mt Victoria, Mt Irvine, Mt Tomah, Mt Wilson, Bell, Blackheath, Megalong
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/documents/maps-of-crown-land-as-community-land-planning-area-1>

For Medlow Bath, Katoomba, Leura, Wentworth Falls,
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/documents/maps-of-crown-land-as-community-land-planning-area-2>

For Bullaburra, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford, Linden
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/documents/maps-of-crown-land-as-community-land-planning-area-3>

For Faulconbridge, Springwood, Valley Heights, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Hawkesbury Heights
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/documents/maps-of-crown-land-as-community-land-planning-area-4>

For Warrimoo, Mt Riverview, Blaxland, Glenbrook, Lapstone
<https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/documents/maps-of-crown-land-as-community-land-planning-area-5>

It is important to also check the document "Devolved Reserves" which covers the whole mountains. This contains all the cemeteries and places like camping grounds, including Katoomba Falls Reserve and Faulconbridge Cemetery. This is a relatively small document containing only 19 sites.

https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/DevolvedCrownLandReserves_CategoriesandMapping_Citywide.pdf

The Sunset Gathering 2021

There were 47 people at the Sunset Gathering on Friday 26 February and the weather held to give us a misty sunset with the pleasant background of harp music. Tara Cameron, President, spoke about coming events such as the Annual General Meeting when Dr. Kellie Leigh of koala fame (see page 3) would speak and the showing of the film, Weather Diaries on Tuesday 2 March at Mt Vic Flicks.

Below are a few of the photos taken while Tara spoke.



Photos by Rebecca Knight and Susan Crick

Walks Program, March - April 2021

The three month walks program appears on our web page: <https://www.bluemountains.org.au/bushwalking.shtml>

Monday walks

Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, Suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. The Group Coordinator is Keith Dorrian 0411 162 345 keithdor53@hotmail.com Walks in early March can be seen on the above website.

Date	Description	Meeting Place	Activity Leader	Grade
15 March	Fern Trail and Hazelbrook Waterfalls Circuit. 12kms. Approx. Lovely forest tracks, creeks and waterfalls.	Hazelbrook Shops, Lower Car Park. 9am (All day parking at Hazelbrook Station car park)	Ros. 0417 261 465	3
22 March	Murphy's Glen Woodford Walk along the ridge top, ending in a fairly steep track into the Glen through turpentine and blue gums. Approx 10Km return	Woodford Station Car park (south Side) 8-30 am. Car pool to start of National Park (about 2Km)	Bernie 0428 364 438	3
29 March	Sassafras Gully Road Springwood to Fairy Dell, via Perch Ponds and Magdala Creek. Approx 10 km. A pleasant walk but, a lot of creek crossings, steep ascent out of the valley and some fallen trees to be negotiated. Also a chance of Lyrebird sightings.	Springwood, Car Park behind Westpac 9-00am	Colin Ford 0421 502 954	3
5 April	Easter Monday No walk			
12 April	Blue Gum Swamp and Bees Nest Hill Winmalee. 13 kms with 270 ascent/descent, otherwise it's all on track with a couple of minor water crossings	Springwood Station Carpark (nth side) 8-35am. Car pool to beginning of walk at the end of Whitecross Rd, Winmalee.	Angela Berry 0427 133 327	3

Tuesday walks

Tuesday Walks are "Medium Day Walks" of 3-5 hours suitable for walkers of average fitness. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Co-ordinator: Susan Nicholls phone: 4754 1516, email: suerosn@bigpond.net.au

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
2 March	Cranebrook Waterways, Wetland & Wianamatta Nature Reserve. Easy 9K	Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753	Glenbrook Station Car Park 0900	2
9 March	Tall Timbers Trail & Yellow Rock Creek Trail. Med/ Hard 5K	Ken Robinson 4751 4534	End of Tall Timbers Rd, Winmalee 0930	2/3
16 March	Lapstone to Nepean River/ Glenbrook Creek Junction. Easy/ Med 3K, maybe wet feet	Robyn Hine 0409 127 012	Lapstone Station 0914	2
23 March	Shaws Ridge - Blue Gum Swamp. Med 10	Rob Hunter 4751 5376	End White Cross Rd, Winmalee 0915	2
30 March	Jordan Springs to Ropes Crossing (Great West Walk). Easy 8K	Doug Nicholls 0455 850 753	Penrith Station on Concourse Bridge 0830	1

Thursday walks

Thursday Walks are walks of 2 - 3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch . Co-ordinator: Beverley Thompson, phone: 4757 2076, email: denfenella12@bigpond.com

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
18 March	Fletcher Lookout and Undercliff Pass	Beverley 4757 2076	Stockyard car park. 9.30 am	2
25 March	Asgard Swamp and Thor Head, Mt Victoria	Tracy 0434 362611	Mt Victoria station 8.50 am	2
1 April	Wind Eroded Cave and Anvil Rock, Blackheath	Tracy 0434 362611	Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45 am	2
8 April	Point Pilcher, Medlow Bath	Maurice 4739 4942	Medlow Bath station 9.40 am	1 / 2
15 April	Nature Trail, Wentworth Falls	Beverley 4757 2076	Stockyard car park 9.30 am	2

Saturday walks

Saturday Walks are usually a full day, longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. Coordinator: Harold Thompson phone: 0409 010737 email: harold.thompson@bigpond.com

Date	Walk description	Contact	Meet at	Grade
Mar 13th	Birrabang Amphitheatre and Eagle Rock. 7km Mt Wilson Map.	Alice 0425738766	Wentworth Falls Stockyard car park 8.00 am	3
Mar 20th	Lawson Long Alley and Mount York. 10km. Hartley Map.	Geoff 49589113	Mount Vic. Station car park 8.30 am	3
Mar 27th	Lambs Creek. 10km Cullen Bullen Map.	Harold 0409010737	Mount Vic. Station car park. 8.30 am	3
April 3rd	No programmed walk. To be decided on the day.	Elect on the day	Wentworth Falls Stockyard car park 8.30 am	
April 10th	Jinki Ridge and Pagodas 7km. Mount Wilson map	Alice 0425738766	Wentworth Falls Stockyard car park 8.00 am	3